Fatwah Concerning 'LOOKING'

فقه النظر

“Fatawa Concerning Looking”

Compiled and Translated by those who seek the
Mercy of Allah Their Lord

The Memphis Da’wah Team

Memphis Da’wah E-Books

In the name of Allah Most Beneficent Most Merciful
All praise is for Allah the Exalted and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His Messenger Muhammad and his family and companions and all those who follow them and their way until the Day of Resurrection

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Foreword

This small treatise is primarily based upon the book, *"Fiqh of Looking"* by Mustafa Abdul Al-Hayy, in which several fatawa and opinions from a large array of classical and contemporary Scholars including ***Muwafaq ad-Deen Abdullah Ibn Ahmad Ibn Qudamah, Mohyee-ad-deen An-Nawawi, Ibn Qataan, Muhammad ibn Muhammad Al-Hattaab, Shaykh Abdul-Aziz Ibn Baaz, Muhammad Ibn Saalih Al-Uthaimeen*** and others.

Some of the major questions addressed in this small booklet are:

- **What is allowable to look at of the opposite sex in medical situations?**
- **If a man is testifying against a woman, is he allowed to look at her?**
- **Is it permissible to look at a teacher of the opposite sex?**
- **What is permissible to look at of people of the same sex?**

And other similar issues

So with the above in mind, we have translated this small booklet of fatawa regarding looking as a Naseehah (sincere advice) to our fellow Muslims, as in the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ where he said: "Religion is sincere advice." (Three times) We asked: "To whom O' Messenger of Allah?" He said: "To Allah, His Book and His Messenger and the Leaders of the Muslims and to all of them generally." [Collected by Imam Muslim]

This work is free for all to download from www.MemphisDawah.com to distribute electronically to read and print for personal study.

And finally we ask Allah by all of His most beautiful names and lofty characteristics to bless us with the truth, and bless us with following it and allow us to die upon it.

May Allah purify all of our hearts from hypocrisy, our tongues from lies and our actions from showing off. May Allah take our souls as Muslims and join us with the Righteous in Jinnah.

Ameen

The Memphis Da'wah Team

Introduction

قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ
أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Interpretation of the meaning

Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.). That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do.
[An-Noor:30]

*** Note Allah orders lowering the gaze before protection of private parts. This is because it is the sight that leads one to become unchaste**.

Narrated Abu Saeed رضى الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Beware of gathering upon the streets." They said: It is a necessity and we just gather and speak there. He said: "So if you come to those gatherings then give the road its right" They said: And what is its right? He said: "***Lowering the gaze***, keeping back harm, returning salaams, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil." [Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud]

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Indeed Allah has decreed for the descendants of Adam his portion of Zina (fornication or adultery). He will attain it inevitably, the zina of the eyes is looking, the zina of the tongue is speech, and the soul craves and desires, and the private parts consent or disprove it." [Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawud]

On the authority of Jareer Bin Abdullah رضى الله عنه : I asked The Messenger of Allah ﷺ about a sudden (unexpected, unintentional or accidental) look, so he ordered me to avert my sight. [Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi]

Imam An-Nawawi (May Allah have mercy upon him) said commenting on this hadith: "It is when your sight unexpectedly (accidentally) falls upon an Ajnabiyah (a woman to whom a man is not a mahram) **without any intent to do so**. So there is no sin in that first glance but he must avert his sight from her immediately. If he does so then he will

not attain a sin but if he prolongs his look then he will fall into sin as this hadith explains."

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said: "O Ali, do not follow a glance with another, for you will be forgiven for the first, but not for the second."
[Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 2701; see Saheeh al-Jaami', 7953]

Al-Mubaarakfpuri said regarding this hadith: "The words *'do not follow a glance with another'* mean do not look again after the first glance. *'You will be forgiven for the first'* means that you will be forgiven ***if the first glance was unintentional***, and *'but not for the second'* means that because the second glance was by choice, **it will be counted against you**."

Without a doubt, the issues regarding lowering one's gaze leads to one of the most Heinous Sins in Islam, Zina (Fornication and Adultery). And not lowering one's gaze is the root or first step that leads down this dangerous path.

The Salaf were well aware of the danger of illegal looking, as they used to say: "Looking is like an arrow from the poisoned arrows of Shaytan."

The meaning here is that the damage that is caused by an arrow to the game is similar to that which illegal looking does to the human being's heart and iman.

They also used to say: "Looking is like a spark (of fire) that burns the wood. If it does not burn it all, it will burn some of it."

How true these words are today as this illegal looking has become especially dangerous in these times of the prevalence of the internet, television (even the News Programs), and magazines in which there are an abundance of images of the opposite sex.

Then on top of that, many young Muslims today are raised in the West and are taught that one should look a person in the eye when speaking to them, regardless of gender. This is not to mention the flood of pornography and other illicit images that have become a major problem in the world today even amongst some Muslims.

It has become a very sad thing to see that Muslims in this day have "boyfriends" and "girlfriends". Regardless of how they met, the illicit relationship started with an illegal look.

And because the problem of free-mixing is so widespread, we have decided to address **the first direct cause** of this sickness, rather than the sickness itself.

So it is incumbent upon us as Muslims to know exactly where the boundaries of the halal and haram are regarding this dangerous issue and exactly how to guard our Islamic modesty. As the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Every religion has a characteristic and the characteristic of Islam is Hayaa'. " [Ibn Maajah]

May Allah send his peace and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad and his wives and his Sahabah.

Issue #1: Looking at a Woman for the Purpose of Medical Treatment

Question: Is it permissible for a male doctor to look at an ajnabiyah female patient?

Answer: There is no disagreement amongst the scholars that the doctor is permitted to look at an ajnabiyah's awrah (nakedness) as long **as, there is a need.** The proof is in the hadiths:

- **Ar-Rabeea Bint Mo'awwith رضى الله عنه said: "We were with the Prophet ﷺ and we treated the injured, gave them water and returned the dead to Madinah. [**Al-Bukhari]

- **Narrated Jabir رضى الله عنه that Umm Salimah رضى الله عنه asked permission from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to be cupped, so the Prophet ﷺ ordered Abu Taibah رضى الله عنه to cup her**. [Muslim, Abu Dawoud, Ibn Majah and Ahmed]

Viewpoint of the proof: The Prophet ﷺ ordered Abu Taibah رضى الله عنه to cup Umm Salimah رضى الله عنه giving him permission to look at the area he will cup, since the one who performs the cupping must look at the place where he will place the cupping utensil. So this shows that the doctor may look at what is considered the awrah of a woman for medical purposes.

Consensus: The Fuqaha (scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence) are in agreement on the permissibility of a doctor looking at the awrah of a person of the opposite sex for medical purposes if they fulfill the conditions that allow it, which are as follows:

1. **The absence of a woman (for treating a lady) who is capable of treating her or there is a woman but she is not sufficiently qualified.**
2. **He must not be secluded with her.**

3. **She must only display the part of the body that will be treated, and he must not look at any other part of her body.**
4. **That one fears she may die, she has a terminal disease, facing loss of a body part(s) or pain that she can not bear if she is not treated.**
5. **That the doctor (or the one who is treating her) should not be a non-Muslim *if there is a Muslim who is capable.***
6. **That the doctor must be trustworthy.**
7. **The doctor must not feel that the female patient will be a great temptation for him. If he feels that she will be source of great temptation then it is not permitted.**

Question: Is it permissible for the one who takes care of the sick during assisting the sick in making wudu or istinjaa'a to look at the awrah?

Answer: The Fuqaha say yes, because they are in the same position as the doctors (see question above). And likewise it is permitted for the one who is performing circumcision or delivering a child to look at the awrah of the patient.

Question: Is it permissible to look at the awrah of a person if he/she was in a life threatening situation such as drowning, burning or crash?

Answer: It is permissible out of necessity. His position becomes like that of the doctor.

Issue #2: Testifying for or against a woman

Question: Is it permissible to look at a woman (to whom one is not a mahram*) for the purpose of testifying for her or against her?

Answer: There is no disagreement amongst the Fuqaha that looking at an Ajnabiyah is permissible while testifying (being a witness) for her or against her. They used the following proof.

The Qur'an:

۞ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ كُونُوا۟ قَوَّٰمِينَ بِٱلْقِسْطِ شُهَدَآءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰٓ
أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ ٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ وَٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَٱللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا ۖ
فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ ٱلْهَوَىٰٓ أَن تَعْدِلُوا۟ ۚ وَإِن تَلْوُۥٓا۟ أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

Interpretation of the Meaning

- O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, Allah is a Better Protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you may avoid justice, and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily, Allah is Ever Well Acquainted with what you do. [An-Nisaa:135]

Viewpoint of this Proof: There is no way to be a witness/testify unless he sees clearly who he is testifying for or against.

The Sunnah: On the authority of Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) that Ubaydah Bin Samit said: "O, Messenger of Allah If I find a man with my wife should I give him respite until I come with four witnesses. He said: "yes."
[Muslim, Abu Dawoud, Ibn Majah, and Ahmed]

Viewpoint of Proof: This hadith shows that it is a condition in testifying that someone committed adultery or fornication that there are four male witnesses. There is no way to testify that someone is guilty of fornication or adultery except by seeing the two private parts. So this hadith proves that it is permissible to look at an ajnabiyah woman if there is a need to testify for or against her.

Consesus: There is no difference between the fuqaha that it is permissible for a man to look at an ajnabiyah woman for the purpose of testifying for or against her.

Question: Is it permissible for a man who is executing a (hudood) punishment against a woman to look at her?

Answer: It is permissible to look at the place of the Qisas (punishment) because it is a necessity.

Question: Is it permissible to strip search a lady if we fear some harm from her?

Answer: Yes and the proof is the hadith/story of Haatib. *(Some companions were ordered to intercept a letter that was sent by Hatib, by way of a lady, informing the Makkans of the Prophet's ﷺ plan to invade Mecca. When the Muslims caught up to the lady she denied she had such a letter. So the companions threatened to strip search her for the letter.)* The Hadith is found in Saheeh Al-Bukhari. Ibn Hajr said: "This hadith shows that it is permissible to look at a woman's awrah **if there is a necessity to do so**." Imam An-Nawawi said: "This shows that strip searching is permissible if there is a benefit (or necessity) and covering provides an evil."

Issue #3: Looking at a Woman for the Purpose of Marriage

Question: Is it permissible to look at a woman whom you wish to propose to?

Answer: Yes and the proof is as follows:

Allah says in Surah Ahzaab: 52

لَّا يَحِلُّ لَكَ ٱلنِّسَآءُ مِنۢ بَعۡدُ وَلَآ أَن تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنۡ أَزۡوَٲجٍ وَلَوۡ أَعۡجَبَكَ
حُسۡنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتۡ يَمِينُكَۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ رَّقِيبًا ﴿٥٢﴾

Interpretation of the meaning

It is not lawful for you (to marry other) women after this, nor to change them for other wives even though their beauty attracts you, except those (captives or slaves) whom your right hand possesses. And Allah is Ever a Watcher over all things.

Viewpoint: You can't be impressed by beauty except after seeing/looking at her.

Also:

The Hadith which stated that a woman offered herself in marriage to the Prophet ﷺ and he took a good look at her is a proof. **[Collected Muslim, Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi]**

Also:

Al-Mugheerah Bin Shu'bah رضى الله عنه told the Prophet ﷺ that he proposed to a woman and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him: "Look at her for it is more likely to make the marriage last."

And Jabir رضى الله عنه heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: "If one of you proposes and is able to look at what will attract or cause him to marry her than let him do so"
[Ahmed, Abu Dawoud, Hakim and Ibn Abe Shaibah]

Question: What is the ruling of looking at the woman one is proposing to?

Answer: It is mustahab (encouraged) due to the authentic hadiths concerning this. (See previous answer)

Question: What is permissible to see of the woman you are proposing to?

Answer: The face and hands and nothing beyond this.

Question: Must one wait until the wali (male who is responsible for marrying off the lady) or she gives permission to look at her?

Answer: You may look when you are determined to propose to or marry her. The Prophet ﷺ gave permission to look without making a condition of her permitting you to look. (Because normally she will be very shy)

Jabir رضى الله عنه said: I hid behind the trunk of a palm tree (to see a lady from Bani Maslamah I was interested in proposing to) until I saw of her what impressed me. So I proposed to her and married her.
[Al-Bayhaqee, At-Tahawee and Hakim]

Looking before actually proposing brings good, because if he finds her looks displeasing he will refrain from proposing and save her from rejection, embarrassment and hurt feelings.

Question: Is it permissible for him to look at her more than once?

Answer: It is permissible to look more than once **if the first look was not sufficient**. (Meaning that her appearance was not clear to the one proposing)

What governs this issue is the need of knowing her appearance; **if it was fulfilled in the first look then the permission to look at her has ended since his need was fulfilled**.

For example, if he looked at her and found her looks pleasing to him and he felt after looking at her that he wants to marry her then it is not permissible to look again **because the origin of looking at her is Haram.**

It was only made permissible to look at her (for that moment) in order to know whether her appearance encourages him to marry her. So if the reason for looking has ended, and there is no reason to continue or repeat looking at her, **then it is not permissible**.

Question: If he looks at the woman he proposes to, is it permissible to look with sensual delight/arousal?

Answer: It is permissible to look with sensual delight (at her face and hands) because the shariah allows him to look at the proposed with the intent of seeing her beauty. He can not leave behind his desires (sensual pleasures).

Question: If the one proposing is sure he will be rejected by the wali or the lady, can he look at her during the proposal?

Answer: No, he can't look if that is the case. That is because looking was made permissible for the sake of marriage and if he is certain he will be rejected then it is forbidden.

Question: If one is unable to see the lady (he desires to propose to) for himself and there is no woman to go look at her and inform him of her appearance, is it permissible to look at her sister or daughter (for the purpose of trying to judge how she might look)?

Answer: No, **it is not permissible** to look at her sister or daughter because the Prophet said:" look at her "(meaning the lady one is proposing to) so he made looking specifically towards the proposed.

Question: Is it permissible for a man to look at the woman he is proposing to in seclusion?

Answer: No, **it is not permissible** to look at her while being alone with her. That is because the Shari'ah has not allowed being alone with an ajnabiyah woman. So this general prohibition remains. The Prophet said: "A man and a woman are not secluded except with a mahram of hers" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Question: Is it permissible to look at two women (together) while it is impermissible to marry both of them at once to see which is more pleasing?

Answer: It is permissible for a man to look at two prospects for marriage that are impermissible to be co-wives.

Question: Is it permissible to look at a picture of a woman who you would like to propose to?

Answer: Yes, it is permissible to look at the picture of the woman you intend to propose to. If looking at her in person is permissible, then looking at her picture is even more so. **But note pictures should only be given to those who are known to be religious so that the picture will not be improperly used.**

Question: May a man look at a woman he has proposed to **after** the proposal, **but before the marriage** if he has proposed before looking at her?

Answer: Yes, it is mustahab to look after he has proposed if he did not look prior to the proposal. But it is best if he looks **before** proposing.

Question: If one looks at the lady he is proposing to and finds that her looks are not pleasing, what should he do?

Answer: Do as Imam An-Nawawi said: "Keep quiet, and do not say *'I do not want her',* because this might be harmful."

Question: Is it permissible for a woman to look at the man who is proposing to her?

Answer: Yes, because the marriage is between **both** not just one party and more so because this is a contract which is harder for her to remove herself from it than him.

Question: What is she allowed to look at of him?

Answer: Everything besides his awrah (what's between his navel and knees).

Question: Is it okay for a man to send a lady to look at the woman he wishes to propose to if he can not reach her?

Answer: Yes, if he is unable to see her, then he should send another woman to look and describe (only) her hands and face.

Question: Is it permissible if he sends a man to look at her on his behalf?

Answer: No, because the Prophet ﷺ made the looking permissible only for the one who is proposing.

Issue #4: Looking at a Woman for the Purpose of Buying, Selling, Renting, Borrowing and Other Business Purposes

Question: Is it permissible for a man to look at a woman while doing business with her?

Answer: It is **not** permissible to look at a *non-elderly* woman while doing business transactions.

Question: I'm a male college student that has begun the process of looking for a job. Our school tells us that it is key, when interviewing for a job, to look the job recruiter in the eyes, and not to stare at the ground. Nowadays, women are the ones giving the interview and I was wondering if it is permissible to look at her, because she may not get the right impression of me if I stare at the ground.

Answer: The reason that you mentioned **is not an excuse** that makes it permissible to look at non-mahram women. You should seek halal provision, and provision is in the hand of Allah; that which is with Allah cannot be obtained by disobeying Him. Rather Allah has promised the pious (those who fear Him and keep their duty towards Him) that He will make a way for them to get out of every difficulty and He will grant them provision from (sources) they could never imagine, as Allah says

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا۟
ذَوَىْ عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلشَّهَـٰدَةَ لِلَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِۦ مَن كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ
بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ ۚ وَمَن يَتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُۥ مَخْرَجًا ﴿٢﴾

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ فَهُوَ
حَسْبُهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بَـٰلِغُ أَمْرِهِۦ ۚ قَدْ جَعَلَ ٱللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدْرًا ﴿٣﴾

Interpretation of the meaning:

"And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty).

And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things"[al-Talaaq 65:2-3]

What your teacher has told you goes against the words of Allah:

قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا۟ مِنْ أَبْصَٰرِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا۟ فُرُوجَهُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ
أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ خَبِيرٌۢ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Interpretation of the Meaning:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do." [al-Noor 24:30]

And the Prophet ﷺ said in a Sahih Hadith: "Avert your gaze." [Ahmad and Muslim]

Who is more deserving of being obeyed, Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, or your teachers?!

So I advise you to adhere to taqwa and to keep away from that which is haram. Allah will make it easy for you by His Leave and His Bounty.

Issue #5: Looking at a woman for the Purpose of Teaching

Question: Is it permissible to look at an ajnabiyah for the purpose of teaching her?

Answer: It is permissible only if the six conditions that Imam Ash-Shafi'ee stated are met. They are…

1. **That there is not a woman who can teach this lady, or there are women but they are not proficient.**
2. **There is not a mahram of hers who could teach her the knowledge.**
3. **That it is not possible to teach her/them from behind a screen.**

4. **They should not be secluded.**
5. **To only look if necessary and for only the amount that is necessary.**
6. **To not look towards her with any passion.**

Question: What should medical students do in lectures given by female teachers?

Answer: People like these students have no other option, so they must try hard to lower their gaze, protect themselves and keep away from the temptation which may lead them into haram action. If he notices that he is starting to slip towards something haram, then he should stop attending these lectures.

Question: Is it allowed to organize an Islamic lecture where the speaker is a woman, but the sister will be speaking to a mixed (male and female) audience?

Answer: This is **not permissible** except in cases of necessity, and on the condition that the men cannot see her. There should be a screen between her and them, and she should not soften her voice too much, because her voice may be awrah. Women are not allowed to say Tasbeeh out loud in the prayer – if the Imam makes a mistake – instead they are commanded to clap [to draw the Imam's attention to a mistake], lest their voices be recognized.

Issue #6: Looking at Elderly Women and Young Girls

Question: Is it permissible to look at elderly women?

Answer: You may look at the women who have reach the age where they can no longer bear children (due to old age) and do not desire to marry (due to old age) and men do not desire to marry them (due to old age). Because Allah has said:

وَٱلْقَوَٰعِدُ مِنَ ٱلنِّسَآءِ ٱلَّـٰتِى لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَن
يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَـٰتٍۭ بِزِينَةٍ ۖ وَأَن يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُنَّ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

Interpretation of the meaning

"And as for women past child-bearing who do not expect wed-lock, it is no sin on them if they discard their (outer) clothing in such a way as not to show their adornment. But to refrain (i.e. not to discard their outer clothing) is better for them. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower." [An-noor:60]

Question: Is it permissible to look at a young girl?

Answer: You may look at her as long as she is not a girl whose looks cause men to desire her or to be attracted to her due to her resembling a woman more than a girl (semi-developed) or stunningly beautiful.

Question: Is it permissible to look at an ajnabiyah woman by way of television, magazine, internet and etc.

Answer: No, looking at the actual woman and looking at an image of her are the same in prohibition, since they both contain the reason why the Shari'ah forbids looking at an ajnabiyah woman.

Issue # 7: Looking at Images of Women's Body Parts That are disconnected from the Body

Question: Is it permissible for a man to look at an ajnabiyah's body part if it is disconnected from her body? (Such as an image of a woman's hand, legs or hair alone, like what is sometimes found in commercials or on products.)

Answer: Every part of a woman that is impermissible to look at attached is **not** permissible to look at if separated.

Issue #8: Hermaphrodites, Impotent Men, Castrated Men, Old Men, Young Boys and Sick Men Looking at Women

Question: Is it permissible for a hermaphrodite to look at women?

Answer: If he's a hermaphrodite who is not attracted to women then it is permissible but if he finds himself attracted to women then it is not permissible for him to look at women.

Question: Is it permissible for a castrated, impotent, or elderly man to look at an ajnabiyah woman?

Answer: It is permissible for them **only if they have absolutely no desire for women**.

Question: Is it permissible for a boy who has not reached the age of discernment to look at an ajnabiyah woman?

Answer: Yes, it is permissible.

Issue #9: Women looking at Non-Mahram Men

Question: What is the ruling on women looking at non-mahram men?

Answer: It is permissible for her to look as long as it is not accompanied with lust or desires. I advise women to keep far away from looking at non-mahram men. It is best for her not see non-mahram men or to be seen by non-mahram men. *This includes her watching wrestling, boxing matches and men's sports.* You will find many women are weak in sturdiness and she becomes aroused by these images and films and is exposed to temptations. So staying away from these temptations is safer.

Issue #10: Men looking at Women for Whom They are a Mahram

Question: What is allowed for a man to look at of the women who he is their Mahram?

Answer: It is permissible for him to see of them what is normally displayed during house chores (which is the head, neck, elbows to the hands and knees to the feet). As for the women, they may look at their mahram's entire body **excluding** the awrah.

Question: My mother-in-law covers completely in front of me and does not eat with me. Is this correct?

Answer: It is permissible for her to remove her hijab in front of you since you are a mahram for her, but she is not obliged to remove it if she does not want to. To remove her hijab in front of you is preferred since this will create (plutonic) love between the two of you and she will be acting upon what Allah has made permissible.

Question: Is it permissible for a man to look at the mother or daughter of the woman he has committed zina with?

Answer: No it is not permissible for him to look at them even in spite of the fact that he can not marry them.

Question: Is it permissible to look at a woman whom I'm a mahram (such as an aunt who may be the same age) for with lust?

Answer: It is **not** permissible to look at a woman whom you are a mahram for with lust. If you fear some attraction to one of them you should try to avoid being secluded with them**.**

Issue #11: Husband and Wife Looking at Each Other

Question: What is permissible for the husband to see of his wife and vice versa?

Answer: It is permissible for the two of them to look at the other's entire body without any exceptions.

Issue #12: Looking at the Same Sex

Question: Is it permissible for men to look at men's awrahs and women at women's awrahs?

Answer: No, The Prophet said: "Let not the men look at other men's awrahs nor the women at other women's awrahs." [Muslim]

Question: What are women allowed to see of other women's bodies?

Answer: They are allowed to look at what the mahram man is allowed to look at which is the head, neck, elbows to the hands and knees to the feet.

Issue #13: Non- Muslim women looking at Muslim Women

Question: Is it allowed for Muslim women to remove their hijab in front of non-muslim women?

Answer: Yes, she is allowed showing her head, neck, elbows to the hands and knees to the feet.

And Allah knows best.

Some Advice to Aid in Lowering One's Gaze

From the fatawa above, we can conclude that it is very clear that deliberately looking at a non-mahram woman and continuing to look after a first **accidental** glance is **haram, and that** it is forbidden **to look at any part of her body (except in cases of extreme necessity as discussed above)** whether one thinks the woman is beautiful or not, whether it provokes sexual desire or not, whether it is accompanied by evil thoughts or not, and regardless of whether the illegal look leads to immoral deeds.

The following are some points that we hope will aid in lowering the gaze, Insha Allah.

- **Avoid places where a person feels they will be exposed to the temptation of looking at the opposite sex.** We should avoid when possible places such as the marketplaces or malls, and sitting in the street, (particularly in the West).

> The Prophet ﷺ said: "Beware of sitting in the street." They said, "We have no alternative; that is where we sit and talk." He said, "If you insist on sitting there, then give the street its rights." They said, "What are the rights of the street?" He said, "Lowering the gaze and refraining from causing offence…" [Collected by Imam al-Bukhari, and Imam Muslim]

- Realize that **there is no choice in this matter**, regardless of the circumstances, the emotions or desires, or how great the temptation or motive to do evil. We **must** lower our gaze and refrain from looking at haram things **at all times and all places**. One cannot use excuses such as the "environment being corrupt" or justify sin by saying that "there is a lot of temptation around." Allah says:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥٓ أَمْرًا أَن يَكُونَ لَهُمُ
ٱلْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَن يَعْصِ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾

Interpretation of the meaning:

"It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed into a plain error" [Al-Ahzab 33:36]

- **Do not let your gaze wander aimlessly.** This will protect your eyes from falling upon the haram (even accidentally).

- Avoid, *__if not completely eliminate__*, the television from your home. There is little benefit in the television and without a doubt the evil is much greater than whatever little benefit one can extract from it. The television is a tool to spread immodesty, nudity and

free mixing of the sexes into our homes, and we should avoid this evil and keep it from harming us and our families; especially in light of this topic of illegal looking.

This is not to mention the fact that a Muslim should always spend his/her time wisely as the Messenger of Allah said:

- "Everything with which a man amuses himself is Baatil (baseless, null and impermissible) - except three, his practicing with bow (and arrow); his training the horse and his playing with his family." [Sahih al-Bukhari]

He also said:

- "The servant of Allah will remain standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about his life, how he spent it…" [at-Tirmidhi]

and:

- "There are two blessings that many people lose: health and free time."

[Sahih al-Bukhari]

- **Get married if possible**. This is one of the most effective remedies. The Prophet said: "Whoever can afford it, let him get married, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and in guarding one's chastity. And whoever cannot afford it, let him fast, for it will be a shield for him." [Collected by Imam al-Bukhari, and Imam Muslim]

– **Fast**. Fasting, as taught by the Prophet in the hadith above. Although this is addressed to young men, it also includes young women.

– **Keep company with Righteous Muslims.** A person is naturally affected by the characteristics of the people he or she associates with. And it is well known that a person will follow the way of his close friend, and this is buttressed by the hadith of the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) stating (meaning): "An individual is upon the deen of his close friend." [Ahmad, At-tirmidhi, and Abu Dawud]

- Avoid reading and/or *looking at* magazines that have no benefit. These magazines, besides having little to no benefit, contain in many cases pictures of scantily clad people that will only cause sickness to enter into our hearts. So, it is best to avoid reading or looking at these types of magazines.

- **Stay in the remembrance of Allah.** This can be accomplished by memorizing the different authentic du'as (supplications) of the Prophet and making a habit of saying these different du'as throughout our day. Insha Allah, this will help to keep our hearts clean, increase our iman and make us less susceptible to illegal looking.

We ask Allah to forgive us for any mistakes contained in this small booklet, and forgive anyone who enlightens us to any mistakes and advises us to that which is better.

We seek refuge in Allah from incompetence, laziness, cowardice, miserliness, from knowledge that does not benefit, from hearts that do not fear (Allah), from a soul that is not content and a du'a that is not answered.

We ask Allah to make us from amongst those that are thankful, mindful of Him, devoted to obedience to Him and constantly in repentance to Him.

We ask Allah to save us from the punishment of the grave, the punishment of the Hell-Fire and we ask Him to reward us with Jinnah (Paradise).

May Allah send His peace and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad and his wives and his Sahaabah .

Ameen!

The Memphis Da'wah Team